

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 198292

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS:MASS MARR,MU,GW
SUBJECT: NEED FOR TOW MISSILES IN OMAN

KUWAIT PASS MUSCAT

1. SUMMARY: REBELLION IN DHOFAR PROVINCE OF OMAN BORDER-
ING ON PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN (PDRY) RAISES
POSSIBILITY PDRY ARMORED ATTACKS AGAINST OMANI BORDER OUT-
POSTS. OUTPOSTS POORLY EQUIPPED TO DEFEND AGAINST TANKS.
DUE TO EXTREME SHORT SUPPLY IN U.S., USG UNABLE RESPOND
AFFIRMATIVELY TO URGENT OMAN REQUEST FOR TOW MISSILES
AND LAUNCHERS. MISSION SHOULD APPRISE FRG OF SITUATION,
REQUEST FRG INDICATE HOW IT WOULD VIEW AN OMANI REQUEST
TO FRG FOR TOWS AND ADVISE DEPT AND EMBASSY MUSCAT.

2. BACKGROUND: SOVIET-DOMINATED REGIME OF PDRY HAS
ACTIVELY FOMENTED A REBELLION IN EASTERN PROVINCE OF
SULTANATE OF OMAN, DHOFAR, FOR SEVERAL YEARS THROUGH
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UERRILLA ORGANIZATION, THE "POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERA-

TION OF-OMAN AND THE ARABIAN GULF" (PFLOAG). SOVIETS.HAVE ALSO TRAINED AND EQUIPPED CONVENTIONAL MILITARY ORGANIZATION FAR IN EXCESS OF PDRY DEFENSIVE NEEDS. PDRY IS BASTION OF SOVIET INFLUENCE IN SOUTHERN ARABIAN PENINSULA, AND IS BASE FOR PROMOTION OF MARXIST REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT AREA. OMAN, WITH CONSERVATIVE BUT

PROGRESSIVE SULTANATE REGIME IS PRESENTLY PRINCIPAL FOCUS PFLOAG ACTIVITY.

3. OMAN ARMED FORCES, WITH STRONG BRITISH ADVISORY AND MILITARY COMMAND SUPPORT, PRESENTLY PREPARING MAJOR FALL CAMPAIGN AGAINST INSURGENTS. FURTHER, ONE IRANIAN BATTLE GROUP IN AREA AND A SECOND ON THE WAY. PROSPECTS FOR FALL CAMPAIGN ARE EXCELLENT. PRECISELY BECAUSE PFLOAG MAY BE SEVERELY WEAKENED, OMAN FEARS PDRY MAY REACT WITH ARMORED COUNTER-THRUST, PARTICULARLY AGAINST OMAN BORDER OUTPOSTS. WHEREAS PURELY MILITARY GAINS WOULD BE OF VERY LIMITED VALUE IN SUCH AN OPERATION, PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT COULD BE SEVERE, AND MAY STRONGLY INFLUENCE INDIGENOUS TRIBES TO TILT TOWARDS PFLOAG.

4. AS DEFENSE AGAINST POSSIBLE PDRY TANK THRUST (THERE ARE PERHAPS 10 T-34 TANKS IN PDRY BORDER AREA), OMAN GOVERNMENT HAS REQUESTED USG SELL--REPEAT SELL--10 TOW ANTITANK MISSILE LAUNCHERS AND 100 MISSILES. DUE TO EXTREMELY SHORT SUPPLY IN U.S., DOD HAS CONCLUDED THAT LAUNCHERS AND MISSILES UNFORTUNATELY CANNOT BE PROVIDED AT THIS TIME. (FYI U.S. ARMY CURRENTLY HAS ABOUT 17 PER CENT OF ITS OWN AUTHORIZED NUMBER OF TOWS.)

5. USG WOULD LIKE TO ADVISE OMAN THAT FRG WOULD REACT FAVORABLY TO A REQUEST FOR THE NEEDED TOWS.

6. IF EMBASSY PERCEIVES NO OBJECTION IT SHOULD ADVISE APPROPRIATE FRG AUTHORITIES OF FOREGOING, INDICATE U.S. WOULD APPRECIATE FAVORABLE FRG CONSIDERATION OF OMANI REQUEST FOR TOWS, AND ADVISE DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY MUSCAT OF FRG VIEWS. KISSINGER

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